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Housekeepers' Chat Wednesday, March 11, 1931.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Tips for Fathers." Information approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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Horace came in to make us a short visit last night. Dinner was almost ready at home, he said, but he had been allowed to run over just long enough to tell Uncle Ebenezer a joke. The joke was on a little girl named Sally who goes to kindergarten with Horace. Sally had asked the teacher if fathers were parents. Didn't Uncle Ebenezer think it was funny that Sally didn't know that fathers were parents?

"Why," said Horace proudly, with the superior wisdom of a five-year-old, "I've known for years that both mothers and fathers are parents."

Uncle Ebenezer, however, told Horace that he wasn't sure about all fathers. In fact there was sometimes good cause for the Sallys of this world to wonder and ask questions on the subject. Uncle Ebenezer was even of the opinion that many fathers were not parents at all and never had been.

When Horace looked puzzled, Betty Jane came to the rescue. "He means, Horace, that some fathers aren't good enough to be called parents."

"What would you say a successful father was?" asked Uncle Ebenezer, casting an inquiring eye at Betty Jane over his spectacles.

Betty Jane considered and then said "The nicest fathers I know are friends with their children. They go walking with them or read aloud or play games at home instead of looking cross or bored. Myrtle Jane's father I think is a very good parent. Sometimes Myrtle goes down town on Saturdays and has lunch with him at the club, just the two of them, as if Myrtle was all grown-up."

"There," said Uncle Ebenezer. "There's nothing like going to a modern daughter to get tips on fathers, good and poor. That's an idea for you, Aunt Sammy. How about giving your friends a little chat on tips for fathers? Betty Jane here can supply you with lots of ideas."

Since this is Wednesday, the day we discuss children's problems, I'll take my cue from Betty Jane and say some things about fathers that have been on my mind a long time.

A well-known writer on the modern family has said that in the average American home the father contributes too little to family life and the mother too much. It may be natural and good for very young children to be more with their mothers, but certainly these children should not be confined to their mother's companionship entirely and miss all the good things their fathers have to give them.

It is very easy in these days for the father, particularly the father in business, to neglect his children unconsciously. In order to earn a living for his family he must be away most of the day. In the morning he can only catch a glimpse of his family before he hastens away to work and, by the time he returns at night, it is probably nearly bedtime for the youngest children. Also he may be tired at night so that he feels unable to enjoy a romp with the older children and may even be irritated by their noisy play. But I'm coming to this point a little later.

I know fathers who have never once been real fathers at all. They are, and always have been, just the family's meal ticket and disciplinarian. Their only relation to their children is to pass out the cash to pay expenses and to mete out punishment. How can a sympathetic understanding be established between the children and the man of the family if from the earliest years the small sons and daughters have learned to think of father as the person who inflicts punishment and gives out money? Think it over from the point of view of long-time good for the children. Won't they profit more from fellowship with their father than from punishments and even money, necessary as these are?

So here's a plea to all fathers, even the busiest ones, to plan a weekly schedule that will allow time to spend with the children. Not from a sense of duty nor with a feeling that they must make martyrs of themselves for the children's sake. No children will benefit from the contact with a parent having this attitude. Instead Father should find pleasure and profit himself from such an association. If he enters into the spirit of play and comradeship, he will find these hours spent with the younger generation fine recreation even for the tired business man. In fact I don't know who will really profit the most from it, Father or the youngsters. And of course, Mother will do all she can to encourage it.

When to start this companionship? Wise fathers begin to give attention to their children in early babyhood. Occasionally, at least, they make it a point to be alone with their children. If other people are always present there is not a fair opportunity to establish this special fellowship, to encourage children from their earliest years to play joyously with their father, and later, to talk freely but confidentially about events in their lives. A spirit of comradeship from the start creates an understanding that prevents the suffering a child may go through when he needs to confide but is too shy and hesitant. In return for this confidence, fathers will do well to tell their children about many of their own experiences. Interested and sympathetic give and take, this is, and the best kind of friendship. Many blunders in bringing up children do no serious harm if an atmosphere of affection

and friendship exists in the home, and if the father helps to encourage it.

Fathers and daughters? I was just coming to that subject. Curious as it may seem, many fathers take it for granted that sons need the companionship of their fathers but that the girls in the family only need the society of their mothers. It is a serious mistake to discriminate between girls and boys in the matter of giving companionship, a gift, by the way, which the child may prize above anything else. Father's companionship is so valuable in helping daughters to grow up with normal natural attitudes toward men.

A jaunt in the country afoot with father, a drive with him on a business trip or a visit to a good movie -- these may be some of the happiest occasions in young lives, long remembered with pleasure. Moreover, these may be the times when understanding and friendship is cemented which will last in spite of all the jolts and jars of life.

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The menu, Miranda, is in my mind, every detail of it. I know, in fact, just how that meal is going to look when it comes on the table. So I shall now be pleased to describe it to you, if you are ready. A vegetable plate dinner for the whole family, featuring baked macaroni and cheese, or baked spaghetti and cheese, if you prefer that. The menu: Macaroni and cheese; Tomatoes stewed with celery; Cold slaw; Graham muffins; and, for dessert, Apple turnover, with Applesauce for the youngest children.

Any questions? Yes, Miranda, I am going to give you a recipe for that good and inexpensive dish -- baked macaroni and cheese. To make it tasty use sharp cheese, "nippy" cheese as Billy calls it. Because macaroni, spaghetti, rice or other starchy foods are so bland in flavor, they need to be combined with tasty foods like cheese, tomatoes, parsley or onions, and plenty of seasonings. Taste the cheese in the market before you buy it for this dish. Is it nippy? All right. Then remember that cheese dishes require a low cooking temperature so that the cheese won't get tough and stringy. Extreme heat is all right for vulcanizing a rubber tire, but who wants vulcanized rubbery cheese?

Now the recipe for baked cheese and macaroni or spaghetti. Eight ingredients:

2 cups macaroni or spaghetti broken into small pieces
2 tablespoons flour
4 tablespoons butter or other fat
2 cups milk
1 teaspoon salt
3/4 pound sharp-flavored cheese, shaved thin
Few drops tabasco
1/2 cup buttered bread crumbs

I'll repeat the eight ingredients (Repeat)

Cook the macaroni or spaghetti in 2 quarts of boiling salted water until tender. Then drain. Make a sauce by cooking the flour,

fat, milk and salt together. Take it from the stove, add the cheese and tabasco, and stir until the cheese is melted. Place the macaroni or spaghetti in a buttered baking dish in alternate layers with the cheese sauce, sprinkle the buttered bread crumbs over the top, and bake in a moderate oven (350 degrees F.) for about 30 minutes.

Receipts for the graham muffins, and the apple turnover are in your green cook book.

Tomorrow I'm going to tell you all about my Next-Door-Neighbor's remodelled clothes closets.